



NEWS FROM

SUMMER HILL

Winter 2000

UTAH

After visiting Alaska and Antarctica in 1998, Ann and I stayed a bit closer to home in 1999. We did take a trip to New Mexico and Utah this fall, however, visiting Santa Fe and many of the Indian pueblos north of that city. After that, we spent a few days in Bluff, Utah which is in the southeast corner of the state - magnificent, beautiful country not too far from Monument Valley with plenty of hiking and visual scenes which are impossible to describe. From Bluff we drove to Capitol Reef, which fortunately seems to be an under-used national park in the center of the southern part of Utah. The drive between Bluff and Torrey, where we stayed near Capitol Reef, was perhaps the most spectacular scenery we have ever seen. I would recommend it highly to anyone who likes the Southwest but hasn't been to southern Utah yet. Capitol Reef itself has many hiking trails and spectacular rock formations. If you are not into hiking, there are gravel roads (dust in some places) and breathtaking scenery. This is Pinyon Pine and juniper country; and if you hike in this area, you have to be impressed not only with the fact that the trees can survive in this high desert but also with the age of the large ones. The growth these trees accomplish each year is minimal and yet some have trunks eighteen inches in diameter. They have to be centuries old.

I would recommend a 4 X 4 high clearance vehicle if you decide to go there as I'd be afraid to take some of the back roads with only a two wheel drive car.

If anyone is interested and has any questions about this area, please give us a call - we can give you plenty of information. If you are out there this fall, we may see you for we plan to return this year.

The 1999 Drought and Our Luck

OPEN HOUSE AT SUMMER HILL AUGUST 3, 2000

We hope you have no plans yet for August 3 because we will be having an open house for our customers and friends that day.

We plan to have tours of the nursery, examples of some of our new varieties on display and a lecture or two on pesticides. Ann and Mike's gardens will be open and perhaps Mike's conservatory, if it's not too messy (hard to keep up with it in the summer).

We also plan to have some of Mike's famous clam chowder, barbecue steak sandwiches, chicken and plenty of other savory treats (Holly's words).

Hope you can make it. We will send invitations in late June.

This past summer's drought certainly was as bad as I've seen here at Summer Hill. I seriously doubt that our water supply would have been enough to get us through the summer except for the fact that we built a backup "insurance" pond two years ago. That is where the luck came in, because at the time we didn't expect to need it - the truth is that I like building ponds.

This was a pond we built on the edge of a very large swamp that extends for about two miles north of our property. It was a very difficult pond to build, because although we had anticipated finding gravel below four to six feet of swamp muck, we found nothing but pure clay instead. The drag line digging the pond had a terrible time trying to move this clay, and we had an even more difficult time leveling out the spoil of mixed muck and clay.

This pond was a lifesaver, and we pumped it nearly empty this summer. Because of the pond, we were able to give our plants the amount of water they required; therefore, growth was quite good on mostly everything. The few plants that did suffer this summer had problems because of the excess heat on the root zone, not lack of water. In general, because of plenty of sun and adequate water, our plant material looked excellent when put in the quonsets for the winter.

The pond down on our Rockland Lot, because it's in a rather large aquifer, had enough water for us to use without resorting to much water conservation. But to be on the safe side, we had a drag line there this fall to dig the
(continued on page 2)

Cary Awards

The Cary Award plants for this year are Clethra alnifolia 'Ruby Spice', which was introduced in the trade by Dick Jaynes of Broken Arrow Nursery and Pieris 'Brouwer's Beauty', which Peter Brouwer introduced to the trade approximately twenty-five years ago. We are happy to say that both of these plants were found by Connecticut nurserymen who had a keen eye for something different in plant material. The third Cary Award plant is Syringa reticulata, Tree Lilac. I'm sorry to say that we are sold out of the 'Ruby Spice' and 'Brouwer's Beauty' at this point although we may have a few in surplus after spring shipping. We usually don't grow Syringa reticulata so we will definitely not have that one this year.

With the Cary Awards in mind, we are propagating larger amounts of Pinus strobus 'Soft Touch' and Sciadopitys verticillata 'Wintergreen' than we usually need. These are the selections for 2004 and 2006 respectively. If you need liners of either of these plants, please contact us for price and sizes available.

Thuja plicata and Deer

Many people have told me deer will not eat Thuja plicata, and it was another plant to add to our list of deer resistant plants. In order to test this, we planted a small hedge of Thuja plicata 'Watnong Green' this fall. For about two weeks, I thought the information was correct. Then in about two or three nights the plants almost disappeared. So if you are planning on using Thuja plicata as another deer-proof plant, I'm afraid I have to tell you that deer find them very tasty. (We did put a deer fence around the hedge, about two feet from the plants and five feet high, and they haven't been bothered since.)

DEER FENCE UPDATE

Last year I wrote that we had installed a ten foot high plastic mesh deer fence around the entire Summer Hill Road nursery since we were getting such heavy deer pressure even during the summer. This is just to let you know that although I'm knocking on wood as I write this, it appears that the fence has been 100% effective. We have not seen a deer or any evidence of deer within the fence.

We are so pleased with the fence at our Summer Hill location that we also installed one around our Rockland Lot. Although the pressure from deer down there was not as bad as on the Hill, we were getting some damage in the spring and fall and decided to stop it before it got any worse. The fence is very easy to install, and we've also used it in a couple of places where we are trying to reestablish shrubs and trees around our irrigation ponds. In the past when we tried to establish that type of planting, we've taken terrific losses, either from browsing or from bucks rubbing on the trees. After about five or six years, we will remove the fence from these plantings. By that time the trees should be large enough to withstand any deer damage, and we can put a small fence around any tree we feel might be at risk - five feet high and about two feet away from the trunk. If you need any information on this type of deer fence, please get in touch - we would be glad to share our experience.

Honesty is not some-
thin'
you should flirt with -
you should be
married to it.

Drought and Luck

(cont. from pg 1)

shallow side of the pond deeper. We should never have any water problems down there, and we did find some good gravel which can be used for road repair in that area.

Cercidiphyllum Katsuratree

We've only been growing Cercidiphyllum and its pendulous varieties for a few years, and it is only recently that I've noticed the delightful spicy aroma that the leaves of this tree produce. In books, I've seen this aroma mentioned regarding the leaves in the fall as they've turned color and are getting ready to drop. But I know from working with Cercidiphyllum that the odor is present all summer long although indeed it is stronger in the fall. It's a very delicate, fleeting odor and quite pleasant to my thinking, so much so that we've planted a Cercidiphyllum magnificum 'Pendula' by my office door to replace the White Birch that unfortunately has passed away. Think of planting Cercidiphyllum near patios, etc. where people spend a good bit of time in the summer - I'm sure they'll enjoy this tree's added attraction.

Incidentally, there are two forms (love that word) of Weeping Katsuratree. C. japonica 'Pendula' tends to weep with very little upward growth unless staked. C. magnificum 'Pendula' is more upright with one or more dominate central leaders and has pendulous secondary branches - large trees are spectacular.

We have been grafting both forms for two years now and should have some available in 2001.

Summer Hill Nursery, Inc.
888 Summer Hill Road
Madison, CT 06443

Phone: 203-421-3055 FAX: 203-421-5189

Spring Hours: 7:30 - 4:30

Holly Johnson - V.P. Sales & Admin. John Nassif - V.P. Production

Betty Allen - Office Manager

Mike Johnson - Newsletter Editor, etc.

JIM WELLS

I first met Jim Wells in the spring of 1957 when I was on a field trip to New Jersey with the hort class from University of Massachusetts. That morning we had visited Princeton Nursery, which was so large it was beyond my comprehension; but that afternoon at Jim's new nursery (he had only started the nursery a couple of years before), I was able to see what a man totally dedicated to plants and propagation could do. I learned more in a short period of time by listening to him than I did in weeks at the University. When we were leaving Jim's, Dick Walter, a great plantsman in his own right, said, "That man can put roots on a broomstick". I doubt if he ever actually did it, but if anybody could, it would have been Jim Wells.

Later that summer I realized I was going to start my own nursery sooner than I had planned, and I drove back down to Red Bank and talked to Jim. When I got there, I remember I said that I planned on starting a nursery and would "give him a little competition". He looked at me and said, "Then why should I talk to you" and proceeded to talk to me and give me tons of good advice for the next two hours. So much of what I did in the early years of the nursery was based on that conversation and information I received from his marvelous book, *Plant Propagation Practices*. I visited Jim at other times in the next few years and always left full of new ideas and inspiration.

Our first rhododendron cuttings came from Wells Nursery, and we are still growing, after forty years, varieties from the original cuttings I bought from him. The design of our propagating houses are a modification on those he had in Red Bank. So much of the success of Summer Hill Nursery came from Jim's knowledge of growing plants that he shared with me - it would have been impossible to thank him enough.

In those early years of the nursery I never missed a meeting of the Plant

Propagator's Society, and I remember Jim sitting in the front row of the audience along with such fine nurserymen as Case Hoogendoorn, John Vermeulen, and Martin Van Hof. All four of them were successful in what they were doing, yet they all did things a little differently - and how they would argue to the delight of the rest of the audience. John and Martin were somewhat subdued, and Case was very loud and full of fun. Jim was the most eloquent. I don't remember any of them ever backing down and agreeing with the others, but it was all done in good spirit and we younger members thought of them as almost like gods - we hung on their every word.

It would be about twenty-five years ago that Jim gathered together each year several rhododendron growers at his home in Red Bank. We met in late winter to discuss the problems of propagating, growing and selling rhododendrons. I felt it a privilege to have been invited to sit and talk with such knowledgeable growers as Beanie Hutton, Bill Flemer, Dick Vanderbilt and others at this meeting. I always considered this the best day of my year. The curry dinners that Cecil and Jim gave us on several occasions, I'm sure are remembered by all those that attended and are still with us. I've never had their equal anywhere and doubt if I ever will. They are as vivid to me now as if I'd been there last week.

When Jim started to wind down the nursery operation in Red Bank, he no longer wanted to have the meetings there. The rest of us tried to carry on without him after he retired, but without Jim as a catalyst, the group rapidly gave up.

After Cecil and Jim moved to New Hampshire, contact with them consisted of a few letters - too few - and phone calls - far too few. One of my phone calls was in the spring when Rhododendron Mary Fleming was in bloom - the large one in back of our

house was given to me by Jim from the garden he placed in the fountain lobby at the Concord during the ERNA Show. All the Rhododendron Mary Fleming that we grow have come from this one plant and, of course, when it comes into bloom, I think of Jim and his wonderful gardens of forced rhododendrons and other plants he displayed at the Concord many years ago. What a feat to get rhododendrons into bloom in early January!

Cecil and Jim did come down and visit us a few years back. By that time, Jim was confined to a wheel chair but still had the same keen interest in plants and the nursery business that he had all the years I knew him. He never minced words and told me what he thought I was doing wrong, but when he said our nursery looked very good, I took it as a great compliment.

The greatest honor I've had while in the nursery business was being asked to write and read the tribute to Cecil and Jim at the 1995 Plant Propagator's Annual Meeting in Hartford. This meeting was dedicated to them, and I believe it was the last meeting of IPPS that Jim attended. He attended several of the sessions and with his usual eloquence had many comments to make, although unfortunately the other three were no longer with us to argue a bit.

Cecil and Jim have for years invited us to visit and we have made many plans to do so; however, something always seemed to interfere with our taking that trip to New Hampshire. We would do it "next spring" or perhaps "next fall" when we would have more time. Although we didn't get to see him, it was nice to know he was there, not too far away.

Jim Wells died on January 5, three days after suffering a massive stroke. Now he's not there - and I miss him.

New Plants

Last year in our winter newsletter I wrote relatively short descriptions of seventy-four species and varieties that are so new to us that I had never written about them before. Betty has just given me a list of, oddly enough, seventy-four more. I'm not going to mention them all at this time but I will mention and describe a few for you. Some, like the first on the list, are improved varieties of plants that we have been growing for some time - others are totally new to Summer Hill. I'd appreciate any comments you have on any of these varieties.

Arctostaphylos

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi 'Massachusetts' We've been growing Arctostaphylos for a number of years and have tried clones from several commercial sources, as well as collecting cuttings from mountain tops in Colorado to the seashore of Oregon. All have been somewhat successful, but we continue to have losses on these plants at about the time they are ready for sale in a one gallon container. We recently tried the variety named 'Massachusetts'. Why we haven't tried it before, I don't know, but we finally bought in quite a few cuttings and find that this is definitely a superior clone. Our losses with this variety are practically nil. It gives us a very full, dense plant with good foliage, ideally suited for production in a one gallon container. The fact that we are now growing our Arctostaphylos in an area with considerably less irrigation than the rest of the nursery also helps with survivability of this species. They are looking very good, and I'm sure you will be happy with 'Massachusetts' Bearberry.

Aronia

Aronia prunifolia, Purple fruited Chokeberry is mentioned by Michael Dirr as being very similar to Aronia melanocarpa except that it is larger - up to twelve feet tall. The clone we have was given to us by Tom Dilatush and is definitely a dwarf form of this plant. A two year old Aronia arbutifolia, or A. melanocarpa, in a two gallon container in our nursery would be somewhere between three and four feet tall; whereas, the A. prunifolia we have are only ten to twelve inches tall - growing wide and full. It has excellent fall color and appears it can be used as a rather large ground cover, especially in native situations. We haven't planted one out yet but will do so this spring, and time will tell if indeed it does stay as low as I feel it will. If it does, it will be a valuable addition to the garden because of its fall color alone. The type plant is native from Nova Scotia to Florida and I'll have to find out from Tom just exactly where this clone came from. This will be a real find if it stays true to form.

Baccharis

Baccharis halimifolia, Groundsel-Bush is extremely salt tolerant and is very prevalent in open marshy areas. I first became aware of this plant while walking near a salt pond in Rhode Island. This was in the late fall and I couldn't figure out what was blooming with white flowers at that time of the year. Closer inspection showed me that the white color is

really silky hairs on the pappus of the pistillate flowers, similar to a dandelion. It grows into a fairly large shrub and could be as much as seven feet tall and seven feet across if it is in a happy location. It is dioecious so male and female plants are needed to produce the striking effect on the female plant. It is possible that it could become quite invasive as it produces a lot of seed, but if large shrubs are needed in poor soil, or near salt water situations, this would be an ideal plant to use because it is quite striking in the fall. It is native from Massachusetts all the way down to Florida and Texas.

Callicarpa

Callicarpa bodinieri 'Profusion' We have been growing Callicarpa for a few years now. C. japonica, and its white form C. japonica 'Leucocarpa', produce a good show of berries in the fall - the type producing lavender to purple berries. We also grow Callicarpa dichotoma which is a more spreading form and is covered with great masses of berries making a more interesting and more refined plant than the C. japonica forms. C. bodinieri 'Profusion' is similar to C. japonica in its growth habit, being an upright, somewhat coarse shrub; but has more and larger berries than C. japonica. It is a striking plant in September and October but not quite as hardy as the C. japonica forms or C. dichotoma. For our customers in Zone 6, however, it would be an interesting plant to try because its fall color is spectacular.

Caryopteris

Caryopteris x clandonensis 'Arthur Simmonds' The hybrid species C. x clandonensis was made in the garden of Arthur Simmonds in Surrey, England. Although we have been growing five other varieties of this hybrid, only recently did we obtain cuttings of 'Arthur Simmonds', which is actually the original hybrid. The reason we wanted to have it is not because it was the first variety listed, but because we read that it was hardier than the other forms. Whether this is true, I'm not sure. All the Caryopteris we grow are quite similar, except in blooming time and slight variation in flower color, they all make quite a show in mid to late summer. They are excellent for small hedges that should be cut back drastically in the winter - they really should be taken back to within six inches of the soil line before the growing season starts each spring to produce full, heavy plants the following summer.

Chamaecyparis

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana 'Golden Showers' Although Lawson Cypress has dozens of named clones, we haven't grown very many because the species is borderline hardy here in New England. We find that C. lawsoniana 'Allumii' has been quite hardy, giving an upright, arborvitae-type appearance. Recently, we started growing 'Golden Showers' which has a very pleasant, rather open habit with semi-weeping branches that are of a light yellow color. How large these will become and exactly how hardy, I'm not sure. We have planted one out and will know far more about it in a few years. Like all forms of Chamaecyparis lawsoniana, it requires good drainage; otherwise, you will have Phytophthora, root rot, problems.

Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Gracilis' - Select Dave Rydholm, who no longer works at Summer Hill, always claimed that he really didn't want to be a nurseryman, but I must say that he had a keen eye for plants. Euonymus fortunei 'Rydholm's Gold' is from a sport he found on Euonymus 'Sarcoxi'. Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Gracilis' - Select is also a discovery of his. I believe he was loading some plants of 'Gracilis' onto a truck when he spotted one that was tighter, fuller and a little bit slower growing than the rest of the crop. He set it aside and we started to propagate from it, and indeed it does make a nicer plant than 'Gracilis'. If you want a plant that is a little slower growing, a little fuller and a little greener, try this one.

Chionanthus

Chionanthus retusus, Chinese Fringetree This can be a beautiful, small tree or large shrub - we grow them both ways here. There are two types of leaves. Since we buy in our seedlings, we get different types in different years - one has a rather round shiny leaf and the other is a longer more elliptical leaf. The true beauty of this plant is the flowers which are upright white panicles that have a feathery effect when in bloom. The plant is dioecious, and the female plants have a rather attractive purple fruit in the fall that looks somewhat like a small ripe olive. The bark, a light brown, exfoliates into papery curls. This makes the plant attractive throughout the winter months, as well as the summer. A nice, relatively rare addition to the shrub border or in an area where a small flowering tree is needed.

Chionanthus virginicus, White Fringetree This is another tree that can be grown as a small shrub if allowed to grow with many trunks. The flowers are panicles that hang down, and the male plants can be especially spectacular when blooming in the spring. It is a bit hardier than Chionanthus retusus which gives it some advantage. Although some people feel the show of flowers on C. retusus is the best, I definitely feel that Chionanthus virginicus is superior. Plus, the flowers on this one are fragrant. The bark is not as interesting as C. retusus, being basically a gray bark. Like C. retusus the fruit on female plants looks olive like.

Clethra

Clethra alnifolia 'Ann's Bouquet' We certainly are growing enough varieties of Clethra alnifolia, nine at last count. However, this is one that I discovered close to a salt pond in Rhode Island and felt that it was good enough and different enough that we should grow it. The original plant has spread by suckers to a width of perhaps ten feet and a length of fifteen. It is a very neat, tidy form of C. alnifolia, being well branched and not growing over five and a half feet tall. The flowers are white. The first ones I saw were in a bouquet that Ann made, hence its name. The flowers were slightly tinged with brown on the bottom. However, since then I have not noticed much of this brown tinge - the flowers are pure white, of medium size for Clethra. It is obviously very salt tolerant as the original plant is growing within thirty feet or so of salt water. If you saw the original plant, I'm sure you would like to try 'Ann's Bouquet'.

Corylopsis

Corylopsis sinensis 'Calvenscens' and Corylopsis spicata Although we have been growing Corylopsis pauciflora, Buttercup Winterhazel, for several years, we have also added to our list C. sinensis 'Calvenscens' and C. spicata - Spike Winterhazel. Both are more upright shrubs with larger flowers; both have racemes that are pale yellow - one to two inches long, flowering very early in the spring. Both will make shrubs that might reach ten feet in height and probably the same width with C. sinensis 'Calvenscens' becoming a little bit wider. The foliage is good clean foliage similar to that of a witchhazel, but in both cases, it's the yellow flowers in very early spring nodding in the wind that make these valuable shrubs for the shrub border. C. spicata is a bit more hardy than the other, being listed as a Zone 5 plant, whereas C. sinensis 'Calvenscens' is listed only to Zone 6. These are good plants to feature in the garden center very early in the spring - they are plants that will draw early customers to your sales yard.

Cotoneaster

Cotoneaster horizontalis and Cotoneaster horizontalis 'Perpusilla', Rockspray Cotoneaster We grew C. horizontalis for many years and then for some reason people didn't want it anymore. They wanted C. praecox and C. apiculata rather than C. horizontalis so we gave up growing it. However, we have started growing C. horizontalis again. Its herringbone shaped branches are very distinctive growing in flat planes as opposed to the arching mounds of C. praecox or C. apiculata. The leaves are smaller giving it a more delicate, neater appearance. It does have red berries, and in many locations it makes a finer, nicer plant than the other cotoneasters. The variety 'Perpusilla' stays lower than the type, being quite prostrate.

Erica

Erica carnea 'Winter White' This, for better or worse, is our name. A few years ago we bought in rooted cuttings from a source on the West Coast - cuttings of the variety 'King George' which is a purplish, pink variety. Low and behold, when these 'King Georges' of ours came into bloom they were all pure white. We really have no idea what the variety is. It grows into a much tighter, fuller plant than 'Springwood White'. The plant habit is very similar to 'Winter Beauty' which is a dark pink flowered form that we like very much. We named it 'Winter White' as we felt that was the best description we could give it.

Euonymus

Euonymus fortunei 'Ivory Jade' This is a nice variegated Euonymus, green center with a white (ivory) margin that turns somewhat pink in the late fall and winter. It grows in a tight mound and is not as sprawly as 'Gaiety'. Theoretically, it is more disease resistant than 'Gaiety' and some of the other Euonymus varieties. 'Ivory Jade' makes a very full plant. We like it a lot and will no doubt increase production as our customers get to know it and want it in place of 'Gaiety'.

Euonymus fortunei 'Sarcoxi' (Very Large Leaf) We bought our original forms of *Euonymus fortunei* 'Sarcoxi' from Garson Goldberg of Blueflint Nursery over thirty-five years ago, and at that time I planted one of the large leaf forms by my mother's house. For some reason, since then the plants of our "Large Leaf" 'Sarcoxi' have become smaller as we propagate from year to year until our "Large Leaf" 'Sarcoxi' and "Small Leaf" 'Sarcoxi' are almost indistinguishable. Then a few years ago, I happened to notice that very large leaf original plant I had received from Garson years ago and decided to start propagating it again to get a larger leaf form of green *Euonymus*. That's the story behind the one we are selling now. It grows into a broad mound with leaves that are three to four times larger than what you may be used to seeing on 'Sarcoxi'.

Hydrangea

Hydrangea macrophylla 'Sister Therese' We are growing several new varieties of *Hydrangea macrophylla*, most of which have been mentioned in our other newsletters. 'Sister Therese' is an extremely vigorous variety with large white flowers - can be quite spectacular but must be given a good bit of room.

Hypericum

Hypericum kalmianum 'Ames' is one of the hardiest *Hypericum*s, listed as hardy to Zone 4. This plant makes a nice, well branched shrub growing between two and three feet tall with bluish-green summer foliage. The bright yellow flowers are not large, 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter, but will basically cover the plant in July. This is an excellent plant for use in front of a shrub border, giving good color in mid summer when most of the flowering shrubs are not blooming.

Hypericum prolificum, Shrubby St. Johnswort is another very nice summer flowering shrub. The flowers are a bit smaller than *H. kalmianum* 'Ames', and the plants are usually a bit lower growing and more spreading than *H. kalmianum*. Although it is also listed by some as being hardy in Zone 4, I don't feel it is quite as hardy as *kalmianum* but still should do quite well in just about all of Southern New England.

I'd like to note that we are also growing Hypericum buckleyi which is a much lower growing form of *Hypericum*, forming a dense mat that probably won't exceed one foot in height but can spread to five or six feet wide. The flowers are small, numerous and bright yellow. *H. buckleyi*, I think, is going to make an excellent, low-growing, summer flowering ground cover.

All the *Hypericum*s mentioned can withstand, and indeed prefer, dry conditions.

Ilex

Ilex verticillata 'Winter Red' I'm not sure that this variety of Winterberry is superior to Lud Hoffman's 'Jolly Red', but we thought we would give a few plants a try. If it isn't superior to 'Jolly Red', we will probably discontinue it for we have

liked 'Jolly Red' for a long time. The description of both plants are almost the same - large, seven to eight feet in height, and the same in width with plenty of red berries in the fall and winter.

Ilex serrata 'Koshobai', Dwarf Finetooth Holly We received some plants of 'Koshobai' from Dick Jaynes a few years ago and have grown a few each year since. It is a very diminutive form of *Ilex serrata* with tiny leaves and very small red fruit. The fruit, however, grows up and down the stems of the plant. In the right location, 'Koshobai' would make an interesting addition to any miniature-type garden. The original plant that Dick gave us many years ago is now still less than two feet high and not quite that in width. *Ilex serrata* is not quite as hardy as *Ilex verticillata*, but the 'Koshobai' that I have planted out in our garden has survived quite nicely through the last few winters. We have no male *Ilex serrata* in the neighborhood, but evidently, it is pollinated by some of the male *Ilex verticillatas* that we have growing native in our woods. This is a speciality plant for your customers who are looking for something very different. It would sell best in the fall when the berries are quite evident.

Kalmia

Kalmia latifolia 'Carol', Red Bud Mountain Laurel This is one of Dick Jaynes' introductions with very thick shiny leaves. It produces a full, compact plant that tends to stay full and bushy - not getting rangy as do many of the *Kalmia latifolia* cultivars.

While writing about *Kalmia latifolia*, I would like to reiterate the fact that Mountain Laurel must be deadheaded if you expect to get flowering each year. Just as with *Rhododendrons* and *Pieris*, if the plant is producing seed in quantity after blooming, it will not produce many flower buds for the following year. *Kalmia* in the wild tends to produce a heavy bloom in alternate years because of this. Your customers should be made aware that if they want to have good flowering each year on their *Kalmia*, they should snap or cut off all the spent flower heads before the plant loses its vigor in producing seed, and they should do this just as soon as the flowers have finished blooming.

Kerria

Kerria japonica 'Golden Guinea' While most of the *Kerria japonica* that are seen in the trade these days are the variety 'Pleniflora', the double flowered form, I tend to like the single flowered *Kerria* better with its arching green branches and larger single flowers. 'Golden Guinea' is a selection where the flowers are a bit larger than normal *Kerria japonica*, therefore, giving it a more spectacular appearance. This variety also tends to bloom again later in the summer - *Kerria*, of course, generally blooms in early to mid spring.

Pieris

Pieris japonica 'Purity' 'Purity' is one of the new varieties of *Andromeda* that we have added to our line. We are now growing eleven varieties which may seem like too many, but they are all slightly different and each has certain advan-

tages over others. 'Purity' makes a very dense plant with large white flowers that cover the plant. It is an exceptionally heavy bloomer as a young plant and quite compact and tight growing, not getting over approximately four feet in height.

Pieris japonica 'Snow Drift' 'Snow Drift' is a very low growing Pieris which produces good flowers with quite long panicles. It tends to grow wider than tall which is different than most Pieris japonicas.

Pieris japonica 'Sweetwater' We will be offering this one for the first time this coming fall. It has good compact plant habit and should finish out as a medium sized plant for Pieris japonica. It has good red new growth, but the outstanding feature of 'Sweetwater' is that it does not set seed; therefore, it does not need to be deadheaded as do all other forms of Pieris that we are aware of. A Pieris that blooms heavily and is not deadheaded can be a pretty ugly thing by mid summer as I'm sure you are all aware. 'Sweetwater' does not have this problem, and this could make it one of the most popular Pieris japonica forms in the trade as it becomes better known.

Pieris japonica 'Scarlet O'Hara' This is an upright form of Pieris japonica with good flowering but more important is the bright red growth that it produces - probably not as spectacular as 'Mountain Fire' but on a hardier plant.

Rosa

Rosa hugonis, Father Hugo Rose Dirr says this plant looks "a little ragged when not in flower" which is quite true. But it makes a nice rather mounding shrub, usually broader than tall, which is completely covered with canary yellow flowers in early summer. The branches, covered with small spines, are very often of red color and contrast with the green leaves. It does relatively well in poor soil conditions and is one of the most free flowering of the single flowered forms of roses.

Salix

Salix discolor For a number of years now, we've grown some of the more exotic forms of willow, ignoring our native American Pussy Willow. Although the "French Pussy Willows" (*Salix caprea*) are quite popular with their very large catkins, I tend to like our native form better as the catkins are more numerous and more dainty in form. Of course, Pussy Willows, along with Spicebush and Skunk Cabbage, are some of the joyous harbinger of spring in our native woodlands, especially wet areas. *Salix discolor* is excellent for forcing in late winter to bring a show of spring into the home along with forced Forsythia. Every garden that has a bit of room and a damp area should have a Pussy Willow planted for spring cutting, if nothing else. These can grow into very large shrubs but can be cut back almost to the ground every few years to be kept in balance.

Salix purpurea 'Nana', Arctic Blue Leaf Willow This willow, which generally will not grow over five feet high, has blue-

green leaves. It is an excellent plant for stabilizing stream banks and gullies. It is very heavily branched and can also be used, with heavy shearing, as a tight ornamental hedge. Its young branches are a dark purple color which contrast nicely with the glaucous foliage and also present an interesting appearance throughout the winter months.

Salix integra 'Hakuro Nishiki' This willow is one of the most interesting plants we are now growing in the nursery. Its new leaves are several shades of pink and white blended together. From a distance, in spring and early summer it looks as if the shrub is entirely covered with flowers. As the summer progresses, these leaves turn green but the variegation can be brought back if the plant is sheared and new growth is forced. We are growing this plant in two ways at Summer Hill - shrub form which we will be selling in two gallon containers and also grafted on a four to five foot standards. Grown in either manner, both are spectacular plants in spring and can be in summer if they are sheared properly. You don't want to miss having this one - it's a knock out.

Stranvaesia

Stranvaesia davidiana 'Winterthur', Chinese Stranvaesia This very large shrub is mainly for our customers in Zone 6. The largest one I have ever seen is in Nick Nickou's garden in Branford, Connecticut where it does quite well. Incidentally, this is where we took our first cuttings. Its leaves are between two to five inches long and one to two inches wide and, although semi-evergreen, have a bright red fall color before falling or staying on the plant for a good bit of the winter. It has white flowers that are in evidence in the summer along with a strong fragrance which may or may not be pleasing, depending on the personal tastes of the gardener. The flowers turn into bright red fruits in the fall which are quite attractive and last a long time. It's hard to describe *Stranvaesia*, but it makes a rather spectacular shrub that must be seen to be appreciated. We also grow a prostrate form of this plant which has all the attributes of 'Winterthur' but stays quite close to the ground. It does quite well in Zone 6, but we probably would not want to ship too many of them into Zone 5.

Syringa

Syringa vulgaris, Common Lilac Roger McNelly, who is the Area Manager at our Rockland Farm, has been working with *Syringa vulgaris* forms for the last few years, attempting to have them grow into good looking plants in containers. This is something I must admit I have never been able to do. But he has succeeded, and we are now producing both the regular lavender-purple form and the white flowered form of Common Lilac. These are added to our already successful crops of *Syringa meyeri*, Miss Kim and the *prestoniae* varieties, which incidentally are doing better and better each year as he fine tunes his methods. We are also starting to grow some of the *Syringa vulgaris* cultivars but not enough to mention at this time.

Summer Hill Nursery, Inc.
888 Summer Hill Road
Madison, CT 06443

**WINTER
NEWSLETTER
2000**

**A Few Notes About
Heptacodium miconioides
Seven Sons Flower**

Heptacodium is so new to the nursery trade that not many selections have been made as yet. However, we've noticed a good bit of variation in the color and size of the sepals which produce the red color after the white flowers have dropped. The red sepals last three to four weeks and give more of a show than the actual flowers. Therefore, in the future we will be selecting plants that exhibit superior traits for propagation.

If you have room for a small tree near your sales yard, this is one to plant. The magnificent color in late fall will no doubt attract customers at that time of year.

**Spring Pick-up Orders
Please FAX or Phone**

This coming spring, if you would like to pick up a few plants from us that have not already been ordered, we would appreciate receiving a FAX of your request before 8 o'clock in the morning, or a phone call, letting us know what you would like. We will get back to you and let you know exactly what we have available. With all the varieties we are growing, it takes some time to check on availability (computers don't go out into the field and count). After April 20, if you want to come to the nursery and assemble an order from our surplus area, that is fine; but if you know the items you need, it is much better to call ahead for it could save you a trip if we don't have them available. In any case, if we can assemble the order in advance, it will save you quite a bit of time as we can load you as soon as you get here.